



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Lava Beds
National Monument

PO Box 1240
Tulelake, CA 96134

Mike Reynolds
Superintendent
530-667-8101
mike_reynolds@nps.gov

Lava Beds National Monument News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

20 October 2014

Lava Beds National Monument Announces Seasonal Cave Openings and Closures

TULELAKE, California— Temperatures are dropping, which means the bats at Lava Beds National Monument (Lava Beds NM) are beginning to move into their winter roosts (called *hibernacula*) and vacate their summer homes. Therefore, Lava Beds NM invites visitors to come and explore the caves that were closed this summer to protect bat maternity colonies. The following cave closures have been lifted: Balcony Chamber Cave, Mitertite Hall Cave, Ovis & Paradise Alleys Cave, Thunderbolt Cave, Blue Grotto Cave, Natural Bridge Cave, and South Labyrinth Cave. These caves provide warm and dry environments which are ideal for bat maternity colonies.

The following caves have been closed and will remain closed until approximately mid-April: Labyrinth Cave, Lava Brook Cave, Juniper Cave, Hercules Leg Cave, and Sentinel Cave. These caves are cold and dry and provide the perfect environment for hibernating bats.

The temporary cave closures are an important component of the National Park Service mission to protect America's resources. Lava Beds NM is home to 14 species of bats including the Townsend's Big-eared Bat, which is the most studied of the known species within the monument. They are a Species of Special Concern in California because populations are declining throughout most of their range, while steadily growing at Lava Beds NM. Any disturbance to bats during hibernation can potentially cause them to become active during the winter, which can be deadly. Lava Beds NM is home to the largest California population of the Townsend's Big-eared Bat and relies on the cave closures to protect this healthy population. Please help us safeguard the wildlife at Lava Beds NM by respecting the cave closures and reporting any bat sightings to a ranger.

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Lava Beds National Monument, established in 1925, is a land of turmoil, both geologic and historic. Over the last half-million years, volcanic eruptions have created a rugged landscape dotted with diverse

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volcanic features. Lava tube caves, Native American sites, historic battlefields and a high desert wilderness experience await you!

For more information about visiting Lava Beds National Monument, call 530-667-8113, email labe_interpretation@nps.gov, or go to www.nps.gov/labe. Also, visit the park's Facebook and Twitter pages.

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